

Reflecting on Reciprocity Norms and Commercial Life in 17th Century England: A study of Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) Moral Philosophy

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Abstract

As reciprocity is considered fundamental aspect of human social and organizational life, there is a need to further explore this phenomenon from various paradigms including philosophy, theology and social scientific perspectives. Although, philosopher Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) moral philosophy provides philosophical foundation of reciprocity, however, it is confined to political and social life domains. Drawing on Hobbes' moral philosophy, social exchange theory (SET), and reciprocity theory (RT), this article aims to explore philosophical and theoretical foundations of reciprocity in commercial and business domains.

Our study develops that in order to understand the term 'reciprocity', we need to draw philosophical, theoretical and conceptual support from literature to realize importance of social interactions in commercial and business domain. Therefore, in this article we have presented scholarship on reciprocity by demonstrating various constructs of norm of reciprocity including quantum of reciprocity, positive and

negative, balanced and non-balanced, direct, indirect and generalized reciprocity. Secondly, we have broadened the scope of previous research done on Thomas Hobbes regarding reciprocity and associated that work with current aspects of commercial life. Last but not the least, our study emphasizes on the significance of social exchange theory and reciprocity theory while prospering upon the norm of reciprocity. Therefore, presenting comprehensive review about reciprocity, this study further invites scholars to adopt future research agenda to ameliorate the concept of reciprocity for theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords: Reciprocity, Thomas Hobbes, Social Exchange Theory, Reciprocity Theory

Introduction

Philosophers exhibit 'ethics' as an investigation into the rightness and wrongness of human act. Ethics being prescriptive and evaluative always have significance importance to determine rightness and wrongness of human action and conduct (Chukwuma, 2022). Considering corporate ethics, there exists an ongoing debate on social interaction within and outside the organization. People are found dealing others with the behaviors based on tension and antagonism and front line managers (FLM) are observed to treat their employees in the same manner (Edward & Hodders, 2022). Being social entities, organizations are created by social beings those create purposeful interactions with one another and thus exhibit social and historical context (Carr, 2003; Fiske 1990, 1992), while their ethical frameworks depend upon their social interaction processes and reciprocal exchange obligations (e.g., Ekeh 1974). Furthermore, Coleman (1986) asserts the need for theoretical support to explain the social structure in the organization and which is provided by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Ekeh 1974; Gillmore 1987; Hechter, 1987; Kelley & Thibaut 1978). Such social interactions in the organization can be elaborated by exploring the norm of reciprocity.

Although the norm of reciprocity has been emphasized in almost all the religions (see Table-1). However, to understand

the phenomenon of commercial life, the norm of reciprocity has been also analyzed by considering various theoretical lenses including psychology, social psychology, sociology, economics and evolutionary biology (Molm et al., 2007; Eisenberger et al., 2004; Adams, 1964; Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Rappaport & Chammah, 1965; Williamson, 1981; Axelord, 1984). For example in psychology, Eisenberger et al. (2004) put reciprocity as vengeance in human behavior and Molm et al. (2007) regarded it as generalized exchanges. Similarly, Lévi-Strauss (1969) elaborated mythology using reciprocity and Malinowski (1992) explained his/her perception of the world. In economics, reciprocity is used to explain social exchanges, individual's voluntary actions and social distances (Blau, 1964). Biologists, on the other hand, used term reciprocity to explain evolution of gratitude (Nowak, 2006; Nowak et al., 2007) and expound morality in evolutionary biology (Axelord, 1984).

Despite that the phenomena of reciprocity has been examined through various practical aspects but the literature urges the need to understand norm of reciprocity based on theoretical and philosophical foundations, especially to address issues related to commercial domain (Gervasi et al., 2022). Here, Thomas Hobbes' moral philosophy could help us understand issues related to human conduct in modern-day commercial organizations, especially in perspectives of reciprocity. According to Fuller (2017), Hobbes was in the view that the perceived relationship between human beings is influenced by civilian norms, rule of law and industry, at large. Moreover, Hobbes was a great exponent of considering moral philosophy in case studies, like in his writings he emphasized on the term 'Leviathan' to explain the relation between economics and ethics (Hobbes, 1651a).

Table-1: Importance of Norm of Reciprocity in Major Religions of the World

Sr.	Citation of Reciprocity	Reference
01	“No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that he desires for himself.”	<i>Islam (Sunnah), Sahih Bukhari 1:2:15</i>
02	“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”	<i>Christianity, The Gospel of Luke 6:31</i>
03	“Try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself, and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence.”	<i>Confucianism, Mencius VII.A.4</i>
04	“This is sum of all true righteousness. Treat others, as you thou wouldst thyself be treated.”	<i>Hinduism, Mahabharata 5:1517</i>
05	“To all is life dear. Judge then by, and forbear to slay or to cause slaughter.”	<i>Buddhism, Dummapada 130</i>
06	“Thou shalt thy neighbor as thyself.”	<i>Judaism, Leviticus 19:18</i>
07	“Regard you neighbor’s gain as your gain.”	<i>Taoism, Tai Shang Kan Yin P’ien</i>
09	“The Sage... makes the self of the people his self.”	<i>Daoism, Tao Te Ching Ch 49</i>
10	“Therefore, neither does he cause violence to others nor does he make others do so.”	<i>Jainism, Acarangasutra 5.101-2</i>

Therefore, within the context of commercial life, the main objective of the study is to explore philosophical and theoretical foundations of reciprocity. Firstly, this article theoretically explains reciprocity in assistance with social exchange theory. Secondly, not neglecting its importance and roots in fascinating the concept of reciprocity, social exchange theory is accompanied with reciprocity theory. Last but not the least, we will discover that how Thomas Hobbes’ moral theory philosophically inspires the idea of reciprocity (see Figure-1).

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was the theorist of modern state and was aware about the growth of commerce as an essential aspect of civic life (Fukuyama, 1996). Thomas Hobbes' inspiration regarding moral conduct in a free society helps understanding issues related to business ethics today (Curley, 1994). Hobbes had a comprehensive political theory with the realistic picture of human conduct in the society and ethics that cannot be eroded from the concept of ideal human existence. As the business ethicists R. Edward Freeman (1991) argues that separation of economics from politics could lead to an unworkable political ideology. Likewise, Hobbes favored co-existence of the thoughts for realism with idealism while creating awareness of growing commercial life along with a concept of justice. In actually, this is parallel to thinking modern moral imaginations in a growing society together with commercial activity. Therefore, Hobbes idea of 'business ethics' has an identified link with the conception of human conduct fit for society.

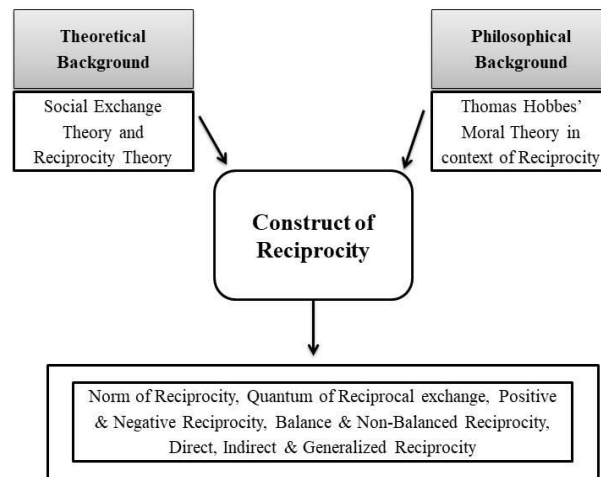


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework regarding Thomas Hobbes' Moral Philosophy and Norm of Reciprocity in Commercial Life

As in *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes emphasized that 'lack of confidence or faith' in others can be overcome to establish conditions conducive to trust. Along with Hobbes, Adam Smith also considered natural liberty as an important element for the free market (Skinner, 1981). Another philosopher John Henry

(2004) recognizes in his writings that one need not to curtail business activities following strict rules of governance. Instead we should expect from the business to develop trust by keeping the interest of the society at priority. While people have reason in common, Hobbes gives analysis of the European society in the context of political, social and economic transformations. Hobbes is aware of the changing dimensions of the world he is living and how the people think of themselves, while living with others. In order to deeply explore and inspire from Hobbes' moral theory, in context of reciprocity, initially one needs to develop understanding about the norm of reciprocity.

The perspective upon the term 'Norm of Reciprocity'

While analyzing the constructs of functional theory, Gouldner (1960) defined the term 'Reciprocity'. According to him, the principle of reciprocity is that the receiver of a positive action feels obliged in return to do the same action. Gouldner (1960) highlights three main perspectives of reciprocity as: (i) a pattern of mutually contingent exchanges of gratification, (ii) a folk belief, and (iii) a personal moral norm. The first perspective explains that the reciprocity is an interaction without the presence of an explicit bargain (Molm, 2003). Secondly, as a folk belief, reciprocity is the cultural conviction that people will get for what they deserve (Gouldner, 1960). Such a popular belief can influence behavior, i.e., the willingness to seek revenge could be melting down by the widespread conviction of rude behavior (Bies & Tripp, 1998). Lastly, reciprocity is evaluated as a personal norm in accordance with individual's orientation of the phenomena. This perspective of reciprocity is most utilized in commercial life (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, the reciprocity norm describes how an individual should behave in reciprocal interactions. Although reciprocity is explained as universal principle, it does not mean same degree of reciprocity prevails in every individual (Perugini et al., 2003). Adopting reciprocity as a personal norm highlights that there are individual differences in the endorsement of rules of exchange: those who believe less in exchange are less concerned about their

reciprocal obligation, and similarly, are less conscious if their actions are not reciprocated (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Moreover, adopting this perspective, it is possible to differentiate between positive and negative reciprocators (Perugini et al., 2003). People who are found reciprocating positive actions likely do not show willingness to reciprocate same intent in negative actions and vice versa (Barclay et al., 2014; Eisenberger et al., 2004). Less often, the norm of reciprocity has been used in social exchange theory, also because of its partial embedding in the definition of exchange (Molm, 2012). However it explains many concepts related to commercial organizational actions where human interaction mechanisms are at high levels. For example, relationships between leaders and followers are investigated as reciprocal configuration (Aryee et al., 2007; Liden et al., 1997). Similarly, reciprocity explains deviations in employees' expected performance and behaviors, both positive and negative, either creating a climate of citizenship or a toxic and deviant environment (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2004). Reciprocity also might be evaluated on the basis of positive and negative feature (Eisenberger et al., 2004). It could occur in dyadic relationships or collective behaviors, exploring subjectivity of norm (Molm, 2012). Hence, number of research works could be quoted where reciprocity was studied along with the constructs of organizational behavior. The norm of reciprocity has generally been applied by the organizational researchers to explore the employee's behaviors that are not formally rewarded (organ, 1997), peer-to-peer interactions Sherony & Green, 2002), and leader-subordinate relationships (Liden et al., 1997; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

The quantum of reciprocal exchange

The quantitative view of reciprocity was earlier presented by Gouldner (1960). According to which, at one extreme, the exchange of benefits between the individuals might be identical or equal. While at other extreme, there might fall a situation where one party exchanges nothing in return for the benefits it has received. Gouldner (1960) says that both these extremes are

rare in social relations as compared to another intermediary case, in which one party gives something more or less than that received. For him, such an intermediary case is found more common than the previous two limiting cases.

The positive and negative reciprocity

Considering the content of acts that are given or received, there is an important distinction between positive and negative reciprocity (Gervasi et al., 2021). The first case refers to the reciprocation of positive actions with the positive actions of others, while on the other side, the second case deals with the reciprocation of the negative behaviors with negative behavior of others (Eisenberger et al., 2004; Gouldner 1960). It is noticed that positive and negative reciprocity are two different concepts. Positive reciprocity refers to the pay back of benefits those who have done as positive actions, while on the other hand, negative reciprocity occurs when focus is no longer to payback benefits but in causing harm to others (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner 1960).

Balanced and non-balanced reciprocity

Balanced reciprocity refers to the equivalent exchange of what has been exchanged immediate and obvious (Sahlins, 1972). The short-term relationships are more economic-centered, therefore balanced reciprocity could be easily traced in such less personal-embedded relations (Sahlins, 1972). While in longer relationships, a perfect equivalence is hard to maintain (Liden et al., 1997). Therefore, the term balanced reciprocity is used where the exchange between individuals is equivalent and the relationship ends up with the completion of exchange. On contrary, non-balanced reciprocity describes those relationships in which equivalence of exchange is not center of gravity. In this case, the act of reciprocation allows individuals to keep their long-term relationship open (Blau, 1964).

Direct, indirect and generalized reciprocity

The subjects to whom reciprocity is been directed creates an important point of distinction to be discussed (Gervasi et al.,

2021). Further, literature suggests that there is a distinguish character between direct, indirect and generalized reciprocity, although such a conceptualization can be ambiguous sometimes (Baker & Bulkey, 2014; Hu et al., 2016; Liden et al., 1997; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Molm et al., 2007; Peng et al., 2014). Direct reciprocity can be termed as all those actions that are given or received between two individuals, while non-direct reciprocity refers to all those reciprocal acts that are between more than two individuals, includes a third party (Peng et al., 2014; Flynn, 2005; Molm et al., 2007). Here, non-direct reciprocity can be characterized in two types: indirect and generalized reciprocity (Gervasi et al., 2021). In view of Alexander (1987), indirect reciprocity can be best described where the compensation for performed actions comes from other subjects rather than the original beneficiary. Generalized reciprocity, on the other side, occurs in social systems where conceptualization of non-direct reciprocity is complex and rated along general connotations. Moreover, authors of organizational studies have used term generalized reciprocity to explain behaviors that are directed toward the entire organization (Baker & Bulkey, 2014; Hu et al., 2016; Simpson et al., 2018). This means that in the field of organizational behavior the concept of generalized reciprocity is more inclined towards pure-generalized exchange theories by takahashi (2000).

Modern Philosophical Mastery: Thomas Hobbes's Moral philosophy

Hobbes's moral theory should be taken as an influential part of moral philosophy that is responsible for providing a valuable understanding on notions of rightness, goodness and moral conduct. All these characters in moral theory help in the construction of moral structure, developing relevancy regarding our attitudes and explore those conditions that affect daily human life p.286 (Rawls, 1975). Therefore, a moral theory explains goodness, rightness and relationship between them. It will also enlighten an ideal account on development of moral character, moral responsibility and how people are motivated to do what morality requires them to do.

'Reciprocity' as foundation for morality

Hobbes blatantly seconds 'law of the Gospel; whatsoever that you want others to do to you, is that you have done that to others', as the principle source of morality. In his books, *Leviathan* (1651), *De Cive* (1651) and *Elements of law* (1640) Hobbes explains the concept of reciprocity in multiple dimensions, positive and negative in his theory and considers it as "core" and "sum" of the law of nature. The reciprocity in Hobbes's moral theory triggers several behavioral needs including equity, justice, gratitude and mutual co-existence. It also entails behavioral prohibitions including arrogance, partiality and cruelty. Hence, the law says that do not perform some act with others that you cannot do to yourself. The law of nature is the moral law (Hobbes, 1651a). Without knowing its character and derivation, we cannot reach the actual spirit of its moral philosophy. Hobbes (1651a) in *Leviathan* says that the 'law of nature commands every man to assign same rights to others that they will apply on themselves'. These foundations of natural law state that morality directs our behavior towards others and our manners. Hobbes defines these foundations as dispositions expressed toward others that can achieve harmony (virtues) or could be undermined (vices). Being human, including sovereigns and atheists, we are bound to obey laws of nature. Hobbes further says that no one is above natural law, except children and madmen (Lloyd, 2009).

Hobbes resembles laws of nature with 'theorems of reason', where the reason requires consistency. For Hobbes, it is insane to accept reason that justifies one's own action while disapproves same reason as justification for other's relevant act. He condemns those who create double standards when they criticize in others for what is acceptable for themselves. A man while doing an act gives different judgment when someone else does the same. Considering circumstances of his era, Hobbes criticized that moral philosophers have contributed nothing to the knowledge of truth. Thomas Hobbes (1651b) in Epistle dedicatory of *De Cive* further insisted that the inconsistency in our evaluative judgments reflect inconsistency in our reactive attitudes, that absurd a reason. Hence, reason

requires reciprocity. Reciprocity is been established as the standard for right action, ignoring which always brings the bad. In *De Corpore*, Hobbes (1655) argues that reason and laws of nature are direct composition of general law that must be observed if we do not want to be harmed.

Hobbes' Moral Imagination and Reciprocity

In a common understanding the term 'moral imagination' reflects to the phenomena that how people expect from one another while they are living in a society under some circumstances (Hobbes, 1651a). The way they think about things, whether acceptable or not, and how they do question and conduct while co-existing. It is the realization that Hobbes's concept about moral imagination is the way forward of satisfying curiosity. According to him, the reason and the passion are common in people. This can be proven by doing introspection of one's own experience of the similar circumstances. And this knowledge is important while governing people because people expect more from the governing authorities. Therefore, one might say that there is no difference between rulers and ruled (Hobbes, 1651a). Hobbes's idea of moral imagination not only emphasizes on the growth of modern commercial society on the basis of self-interest, but also to examine views of the others. There are universal features of human conduct that lay importance of getting interested in others. Experiences have shown that the approach of setting ourselves apart from others could be destructive, if we do not learn how to conduct ourselves morally, that is called self-restraint. His thoughts were later supported by Adam Smith (Fuller, 2017). Hence, a moral imagination gives us the courage of thinking about others, keeping self-interest in mind.

Social character of Goodness

In *Leviathan*, it is written that moral philosophy is nothing but a science of what is "good" and "evil", while "good" or "evil" are just names that in actions of common life might confirm or contradict reason (Hobbes, 1651a). These names are subjective in nature. The names: "good" and "evil", affect our social behavior- our way of thinking about others, living in a shared

social environment. A standard for goodness is set while characterizing the meaning of the terms “good” and “evil”. The requirement for sensing the standard is objective, but taken as matter of judgment and no parameters are set to track ‘right reason’. Hobbes observed that people are rational while thinking of “good”. Even considering interest of common business, the critical thinking would persist because people’s appetite and hatred affect their use of terms “good” and “evil” (Hobbes, 1651a). In *De Cive*, Hobbes (1651c) argues that people use word “good” depends upon their personal desire, will or approval, without knowing whether their judgment is based on the reason in the actions of common life (Gert, 1991). We make evaluative statements based upon our personal standards. Hobbes finds a common non-moral use of “good” and “bad”, picking out what is pleasing, desirable or useful, or not, to one’s own thinking pattern living in the society without realizing appropriate reasons for the cause. Moreover, everything seems good and is pleasing whatever a person wills (Hobbes, 1651b). Sometimes for good and evil, people unconsciously change their tastes.

Here Hobbes is found critic of the “schools of Grecians”, because under the lights of his thinking “ their moral philosophy describes their own passions, they set the rules of good and bad based on their own liking and disliking”, which is against the rules of common wealth (Hobbes, 1651c). Also, he observes that it is a common practice by to use moral language purposefully in pursuit of personal gain, unlike sociable creatures that lack words, “men express about goodness in likeness of evil and evil in likeness of good” (Hobbes, 1651a). Further, in actions of common life, men can commit mistake in their judgment regarding use of reason. The standards of goodness are linked with the standards of rightness. According to Hobbes, goodness requires reason as it is found attached to reciprocity, and reciprocity is the core principle of rightness. Hence, Goodness could not be considered independent of rightness.

Moral Character and virtue

Hobbes's literature states that the actions which meet requirements of natural law usually fall in the category of right action without realizing whether the performer of the action was motivated rightly or not. There will be a fear of action losing a good moral character if it is motivated by the fear of punishment or hope of gain. On the other hand, the action would be considered as virtuous even it commits an error or shows weakness, if a person is motivated right and his attitude is guided in the right direction. Here Hobbes is accepting Aristotelian view that immoral actions could be done in the heat of passion. Humans commit mistakes, but these mistakes could not question character of the person (Hobbes, 1651a). Thus a man's unjust actions could be still considered just, if he feels love for justice and condemns his unjust doing. On contrary, the unjust man is not shameful of the harm he has done to someone, neglects justice and not fearful on his unworthy action. Here, for Hobbes morality is not dependent upon narrow self-interest of the individual, but is composed of the norms that are responsible for establishing a desirable social environment. In *De homine*, Hobbes mentioned characteristics that promote personal gains could not become moral virtues unless they promote social harmony (Gert, 1991). Hobbes emphasizes that sensibleness, motivations and habits of cooperation with others while living in the social environment, comprise characteristics of a virtuous man.

Moral Motivation and responsibility

Hobbes in his moral philosophy argues that motivation is an important factor in judging the character. For him an individual must not compromise everlasting feelings while following the command of the sovereign. According to Hobbes if someone obeys the command of the sovereign then his/her obedient action belongs to the sovereign. He further explains that the person who is obedient to the command is cause of the action, not the author of action. Action belongs to the person who commands it (Hobbes, 1651a). He principally concludes that all those actions those are externally influenced by the command

of the sovereign without internal approbation, are the actions of the sovereign, and not of the subject.

Any individual is morally responsible for his own action. If someone does the action not on his/her own will but due to command provided by the sovereign, is because of the fear of punishment that would occur while disobeying sovereign, then the act is of the sovereign not his/her (Lloyd, 2017).

Can we inspire moral behaviors applying Thomas Hobbes' moral theory?

Hobbes narrates that an individual could be motivated through recognizing that moral action is required for the sake of law. For him this form of internal motivation is rare. A punishment fear might also motivate moral behavior. Further relating advantage of our moral action to others, Hobbes suggests that even people's benevolence is limited, still benevolence and charity could motivate behaviors. Another important source of motivation is the human desire to obtain other's admiration and avoid their contempt. Hobbes elaborates basic feature of human nature that every man desires to be valued by the others at least as highly as he values himself, and which is difficult to attain because every individual values himself wiser than most of other men (Hobbes, 1651a). He explains far beyond that the voluntary actions performed by a man, either seek advantage, reputation or honor among his companions' (Hobbes, 1651c).

Hobbes presented an original and distinctive moral theory which demonstrates that perspectival reciprocity establishes moral norms for each individual. According to him humans and their social systems are almost alike that their norms are substantially common and where reciprocity seems a crucial factor celebrated among them. This concludes Thomas Hobbes' moral theory that worth further investigation (Lloyd, 2009).

Reciprocity theory in Business Ethics

Instead of kindness, selfishness is found in the behaviors of people (Basha et al., 2015). The concerning situation might be understood well with the help of reciprocity theory. We can

find roots of reciprocity theory in 1974, when Philip Kunz (sociologist) performed an experiment (Kunz & Woolcott, 1976). Kunz mailed 'Christmas greeting cards' along with notes and family photo to 600 selected strangers. In return 200 replies were received. Here comes the all-important question, why would people reply back to the person who is a complete stranger? Now this explains reciprocity at work (Kunz, 1969). Similar nice action was launched by Kunz in sending those people 'Holiday cards' and in return they were compelled to reply in return (Bolton & Ockenfels, 2000; Cox, 2004; Dufwenberg & Kirchsteiger, 2004). As a result, it was concluded that people will do a favour if someone offers kindness in reward; even that person is a stranger (Shamsudin et al., 2018). Same applies to the business. If the seller being kind to the customer offers a good service and rewards, in return he could expect customers' satisfaction and loyalty (Shamsudin et al., 2018). On contrary, negative reciprocity will lead to negative returns from others. Furthermore, 'Reciprocity theory' explains the difference between human behaviors and their actions that were found different toward other people (Shamsudin et al., 2015). This theory has two different categories. One is emotional reciprocity while the other is financial or material reciprocity (Diekmann, 2004; McCabe et al., 2003; Ostrom, 1998). Emotional reciprocity explains the behavior when someone feels good and expresses feelings by saying thank you, it is my pleasure, it was a great time to work with you, or really appreciated what you have done for me. If your action makes people feel better, it is a positive reciprocity (Chiu et al., 2006; Diekmann, 2004; Shiau & Luo, 2012; Watanabe Et al., 2014). The other type of reciprocity is financial that is not expressed by words but by the action towards people (Hasim et al., 2018; Shamsudin, Nurana, Aesya & Nabi, 2018; Shamsudin, Razak et al., 2018). When people are kind and do good things like helping others, then they also expose themselves to the thankful actions of the others. Like when you help people those broken down their vehicle on highway in fixing their car, they not only say thank you but also offer money for helping them in difficult time or may be inviting you to join them on lunch together and they will help you latter in your problem. This is a daily life example of

reciprocity theory that shows tendency of human to repay something that has been done earlier either good or bad (Aminuddin, Don & Shamsudin, 2020). As mentioned earlier that in this paper reciprocity theory discovers its roots in Social Exchange Theory, therefore, the literature fascinates the detailed conceptual linkage between the two theories.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) theory has been best widely considered as one of the most influential theoretical construct to understand organizational behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Models related to the field of organizational behavior are framed using SET, based upon some specific exchange rules or principles (Gervasi et al., 2021). The SET suggests that the interaction behavior between individuals is a mutually contingent process, in which two or more person exchange something of non-financial value (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). Such a kind of exchange between the parties is voluntary and gets motivated through a rewarding response (Blau, 1964). Chiaburu et al. (2011) argue that higher levels of trust and flexibility positively support social exchanges. Further, these exchanges are distinguished from economic exchanges (Blau, 1964), as they are short term and based on lower levels of trust, and therefore require active monitoring (Chiaburu et al. 2011). Further, Molm (2003) is in the view that certain analytical concepts including who, what, where and how affect exploring various perspectives of SET. These concepts inculcate actors, resources, structures and process. Actors are those entities (person, group or organization) who are involved in social exchange, while resources suggest what possessions (e.g tangible goods) or capabilities (e.g ability to provide status or approval) associated to other actors are available for exchange. Structures (e.g networks or relations of mutual dependence) explain where exchange takes place. Lastly, processes (activities) describe how an exchange will take place. Individuals differ in their propensity to social exchange and such differences define their specific exchange orientation (Eisenberger et al., 1987; Thomas et al., 2016). Certain rules and regulations (it depends which rule be

followed to negotiate a reciprocal exchange) govern different forms of social exchanges (Yoshikawa et al., 2019).

Discussion and Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of Thomas Hobbes' moral philosophy alongside Social exchange theory and Reciprocity theory offers a profound understanding of norm of reciprocity in commercial and business domains. By delving into philosophical and theoretical foundations of reciprocity, the current study sheds light on the intricate dynamics of interactions within social and organizational structures. In this article organizations are encouraged through the lens of reciprocity to enhance morality and create culture of trust and mutual benefits.

Furthermore by drawing on Hobbes' philosophical framework, organizations can gain a deeper understanding of importance of trust, mutual obligations, and civic virtue in fostering sustainable relationships and ethical behaviors. Hobbes' exploration of human nature and social contract underscores the significance of reciprocity as a foundational principle for harmonious interactions within commercial environments.

The current study emphasizes the significance of reciprocity as the fundamental pillar for moral conduct within commercial and business realms. It highlights how reciprocity not only forms the basis for ethics and virtues but also instills the sense of righteousness. The discussion accentuates the importance of introspection into oneself as an initial step towards understanding the universal nature of humanity. The article also asserts that Thomas Hobbes' writings on moral conduct enlighten a rich foundational ground for different kinds of business ethics. Hobbes' account on business ethics discovered links between philosophy, ethics, moral psychology and politics, and related them with the commercial conduct in the society (Fuller, 2017). As Hobbes offers an extended investigation into norms of self-consciousness, the studies of business ethics must also encourage the same, which ultimately means extended awareness and understanding of others. Hobbes arguments are therefore directed towards the governors

and the governed, managers and the employees, leaders and followers-to us all.

This conceptual paper has highlighted the importance of reciprocity as crucial foundation for moral conduct in commercial and business domains. Not only reciprocity provides basis for ethics and virtues, but also sense of rightness. In our paper the structure of norm of reciprocity was explained in accordance with the theoretical framework provided by Social Exchange Theory. This theory further paved the way forward to investigate theoretical implications of Reciprocity theory. In this study we have tried to develop the understanding that the entire theoretical framework required a philosophical foundation and which was found in the Moral philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes being the ethical egoist advocated phenomena of moral reciprocity in the society. His arguments not only lay philosophical but theoretical, moral and practical implications regarding reciprocity.

In essence, the fusion of Thomas Hobbes' moral philosophy with contemporary theories of social exchange and reciprocity suggest that the organizations must emphasize on their reciprocal intent for improving morality in their culture, so that they can achieve sustainable goals of well-being within and outside the organization. Last but not the least, surely there is a need to further investigate notions of reciprocity from different aspects of organizational behavior constructs, so to find out how reciprocity affects certain organizational behaviors, positively or negatively. By doing so, people can develop social interaction within commercial and business domain based on the guidelines that are provided by the norm of reciprocity.

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